



# Annie App

*Texting How-To:  
Exchanging SMS Text  
Messages with Annie*



# *Texting How-To*

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# Overview

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The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Annie mobile application is a Short Message Service (SMS) text messaging capability that promotes self-care for Veterans enrolled in VA health care. You can use Annie with a basic cell phone or with any device that can connect to the Internet, such as a smartphone, tablet or computer. **This document is intended for users who will be using Annie on a basic cell phone.**

Annie is meant to be used for your own self-care.

- When your provider or VA health care team signs you up for Annie for a health issue, you will receive automated messages that prompt you to track your own health. When you use Annie to help you track your health, you can collect readings about yourself over time, giving you a more complete picture of your health. For example, if you work to control high blood pressure, you send your readings from home so that Annie can let you know about staying on track and how you are doing.
- You can also get updates from your VA medical facility and reminders about your upcoming appointments.

***Important: Annie is for your own self-care. Your text and message replies to Annie are kept in a computer system. Your VA health care team will be able to view the messages but will not routinely review them. Annie is not a way to text your VA clinician. You are responsible for your own health and should contact your VA health care team directly when you have health issues. Text messaging is not secure (texts can be read by anyone with access to your phone) and has costs, depending on your plan. Talk to your cell phone service carrier if you have questions about text messaging costs.***

# Texting How-To

Depending on the type of device you are using, there are a couple of ways to get to your text messaging feature.

1. You might have an icon on your screen that looks like a speech balloon. Click on the icon to open a message draft for a text.
2. You might have to go to a main menu on your phone and select the "Messages" or "Messaging" option. Then select "Text Message" or "Text Messaging," and choose "New Message," "Write Message" or an icon that looks like it will create a new message.



After you have gotten to a new message draft, there will be a "To" line, which is where you type in the phone number you would like to text or the name of someone who is on the contact list stored in your phone. There will also be a place for you to type a message using your keyboard or the numbers on your phone that have letters assigned to them. When you are finished writing your message, click **Send**.

## Using Basic Texting

If your phone does not have a full keyboard, you can use the number keys to compose the message.

First, find the button with the letter you would like to use and press the number repeatedly until the letter you want appears. Then pause to let the cursor advance to type in your next letter. For example, to type "Hello," you would type "4-4-3-3-5-5-5-5-5-5-6-6-6."

Check it over once you're finished, and fix any letters or numbers that are incorrect. You can change the word by using the up/down arrows and by pressing "0" to backspace.

## Using T9 or predictive text

T9, or predictive text, is a feature on your phone that tries to predict what you are writing. Based on the first few letters you put together, T9 will give you suggestions of the words you might be spelling. You can turn this feature on or off in the options or settings menu of your phone.

If you are using T9 on your phone, find the button with the letter you would like to use and press it once. Do this for the entire word. For example, if you would like to write "hello," you only need to press 4-3-5-5-6, instead of push the button repeatedly to get the letter you want (4-4-3-3-5-5-5-5-5-5-6-6-6).

Check to see if the word is entered correctly. If it is not entered correctly, you may have spelled the word incorrectly. Try again, remembering to press only the number for the letter you need ONCE. If that isn't the problem, you may have entered a combination of letters that matches more than one word. For instance, the word "call" uses the combination 2-2-5-5, as does "ball" and "balk." Tap the **Next** button on your phone to scroll through a list of options for words, and you can select the word you want.

**NOTE:** These instructions may differ slightly depending on the cell phone you are using. If you have additional questions about using your phone, please contact your device manufacturer for instructions or to assist with troubleshooting technical issues.



# Starting and Stopping Annie

After you have agreed to use Annie, registered your phone number and set your message preferences, Annie will send you a text message that asks you to confirm your participation. (If you have questions about signing up, talk to your VA health care team or visit [mobile.va.gov/training/annie-veterans](https://mobile.va.gov/training/annie-veterans)). After registration, you simply need to text **START** in response to the message Annie sends to you to initiate the program.

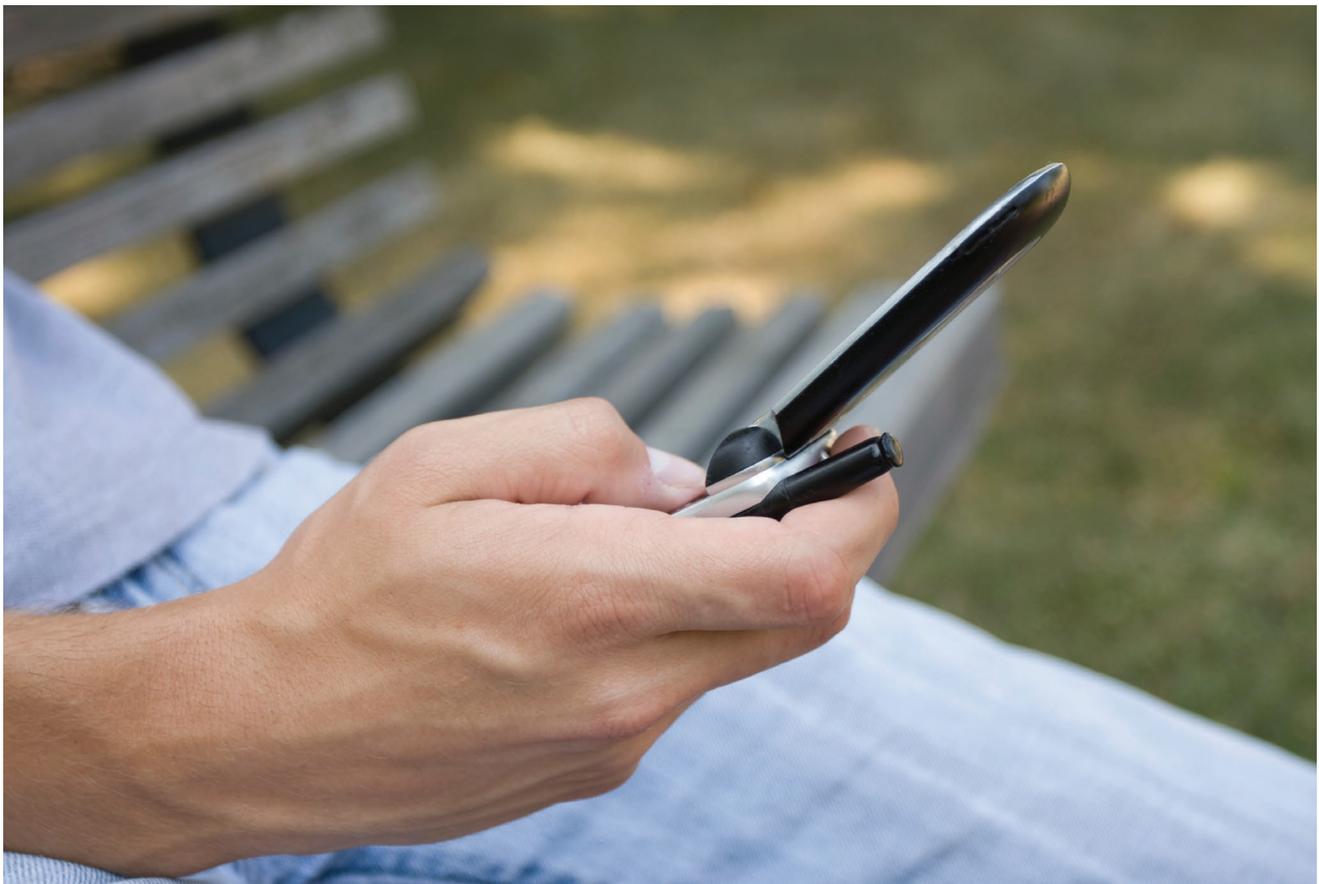
You can also text to stop/start and pause/resume messages with Annie:

**Stop/Start** – To stop receiving messages from Annie, type and send the message: **“STOP.”** To start receiving messages again, type and send the message: **“START.”** **NOTE:** You will have to notify your VA health care team that you have begun using Annie again so that your VA health care team can re-enable the personalized messages Annie sends to you.

**Pause/Resume** – To halt messages from Annie temporarily, type and send the message: **“PAUSE.”** To start receiving messages again, type and send the message **“RESUME.”** Annie will automatically begin sending you messages again.

**NOTE:** Stopping or pausing messages from Annie will not cease the sending of Appointment Reminders and VA Medical Center Facility Messages, but you can stop these messages by changing your Appointment/Info Messages preferences (which you have to access the Annie App online or through the smartphone app to do). If you send the command **HELP** to Annie, Annie will respond with help desk information and a list of the available Annie commands.

If you plan to change your cell phone number, please text **PAUSE** to Annie from your old phone number, and then notify your VA health care team to update your new phone number. After your VA health care team has updated your phone number and you have your mobile phone with your new number, text **RESUME** to Annie from your new number.

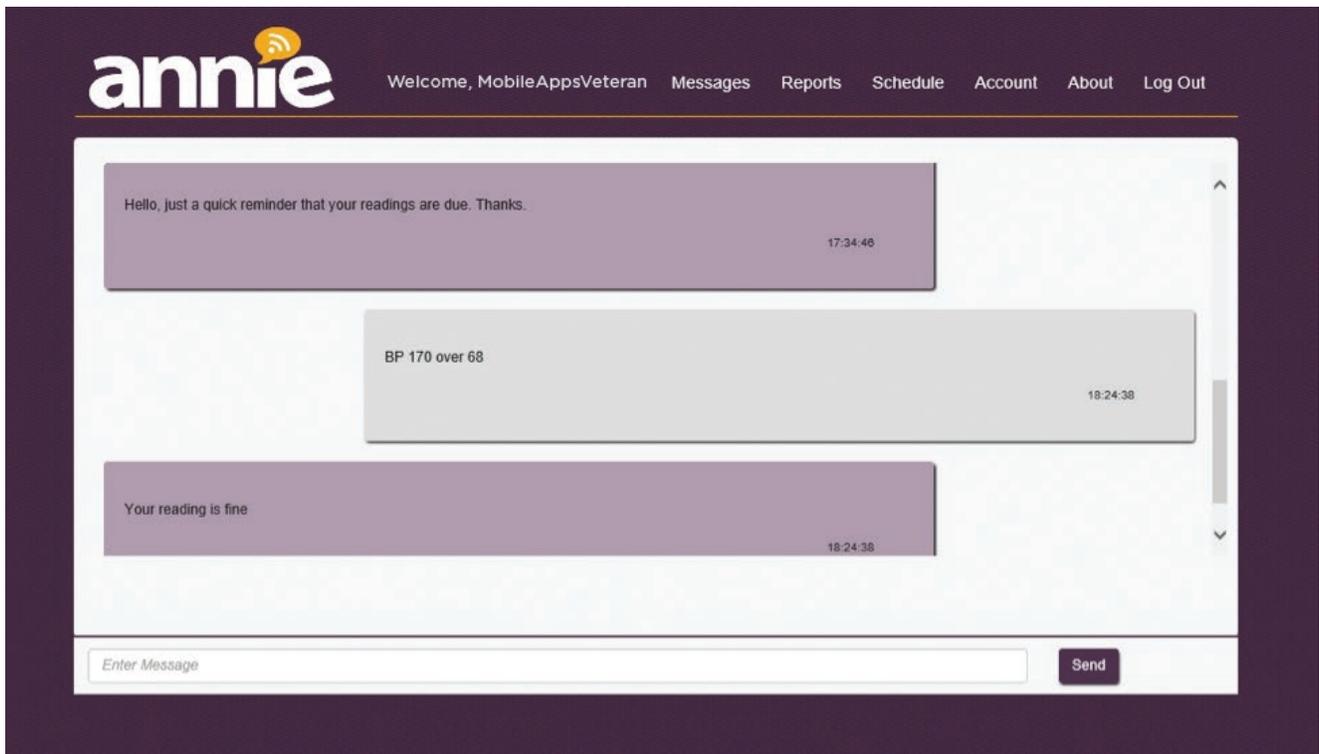


# Sending a Message to Annie

Find your phone’s text messaging feature. If you are creating a new message to Annie, either reply to a previous message, or enter Annie’s number from a previous message in the “To” field of a new message. If you are responding to a message Annie has sent that requests your information, select **“Reply”** on her message to submit your health information.

When you respond to Annie by sending your readings (such as your blood pressure measurement), you **MUST START** your message with a key word or abbreviation so that Annie understands your message. Annie uses these keywords to know what kind of information you are sending. The letters can be upper or lower case. Spelling has to be **EXACT**. Depending on the information you send, begin your message with one of the following keywords or abbreviations (see terms in bold):

When Annie asks you to send this information	Start your message response with
Blood Pressure	<b>BP or BLOOD</b>
Pulse Oximetry (SpO2) or Oxygen level	<b>OX or OXYGEN</b>
Blood Glucose or Sugar	<b>BG or GLUCOSE or SUGAR</b>
Glucose Before Eating	<b>BGB or BEFORE</b>
Glucose After Eating	<b>BGA or AFTER</b>
Weight Loss	<b>WE or WEIGHT</b>
Caloric Intake	<b>CAL or CALORIES</b>
Amount of Exercise	<b>EXERCISE</b>
Temperature	<b>TEMP</b>
Pulse	<b>PULSE</b>



For example, if Annie asked you to send your temperature, and your reading at home is 98°F, you would type: **TEMP 98** or **temp 98**. If you responded with **98**, without the 'Temp', Annie wouldn't understand your message. If you use the Annie App for Veterans, tap **Messages** at the top of the screen. Type **Temp 98** in the Enter Message box at the bottom. Tap **Send**.